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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Afghanistan, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Monaco, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sudan, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: draft resolution

Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992, as well as its subsequent resolutions on the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to national or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities,

Considering that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities contribute to political and social stability and peace and enrich the cultural heritage of society as a whole in the States in which such persons live,

Concerned by the growing frequency and severity of disputes and conflicts concerning minorities in many countries, and their often tragic consequences,

and concerned also that persons belonging to minorities are particularly vulnerable to displacement through, inter alia, population transfers, refugee flows and forced relocation,

Acknowledging that the United Nations has an increasingly important role to play regarding the protection of minorities by, inter alia, taking due account of and giving effect to the Declaration,

Noting that the Working Group on Minorities of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities held its third session from 26 to 30 May 1997, and that its report will be made available to the Commission on Human Rights,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General;[1]

2. Reaffirms the obligation of States to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law in accordance with the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities;

3. Urges States and the international community to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, as set out in the Declaration, including through the facilitation of their participation in all aspects of the political, economic, social, religious and cultural life of society and in the economic progress and development of their country;

4. Also urges States to take, as appropriate, all the necessary constitutional, legislative, administrative and other measures to promote and give effect to the Declaration;

5. Recognizes that respect for human rights and the promotion of understanding and tolerance by Governments as well as between and among minorities are central to the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to minorities;

6. Appeals to States to make bilateral and multilateral efforts, as appropriate, in order to protect the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities in their country, in accordance with the Declaration;

7. Calls upon the Secretary-General to make available, at the request of Governments concerned, qualified expertise on minority issues, including the prevention and resolution of disputes, to assist in existing or potential situations involving minorities;

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[1] A/52/498.

8. Calls upon the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote, within her mandate, the implementation of the Declaration and to continue to engage in a dialogue with Governments concerned for that purpose;

9. Requests the High Commissioner to continue her efforts to improve the coordination and cooperation among United Nations programmes and agencies on activities related to the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities and to take the work of relevant regional organizations active in the field of human rights into account in her endeavours;

10. Welcomes the inter-agency consultation of the High Commissioner with United Nations programmes and agencies on minority issues and calls upon those programmes and agencies to contribute actively to this process;

11. Urges all treaty bodies to give due regard, within their respective mandates, on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities;

12. Calls upon all special representatives, special rapporteurs and working groups of the Commission on Human Rights to continue to give attention, within their respective mandates, to situations involving minorities;

13. Encourages intergovernmental as well as non-governmental organizations to continue to contribute to the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities;

14. Expresses its expectation that the Working Group on Minorities of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities will further implement its mandate and continue to hold one session annually, with the involvement of a wide range of participants;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the implementation of the present resolution under the item entitled "Human rights questions".